

SELECTIONS FROM ROMANS
&
THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

A PARAPHRASE

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A PARAPHRASE OF
SELECTIONS FROM
ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO
THE ROMANS

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CHAPTER I

(i. 1-7, 14-17)¹

HE begins, according to his custom, by wishing to his correspondents grace and peace. In this he is combining in one benediction things new and old. The pleasant, easy formula, "Peace be with you," is an Old Testament blessing. It is a benevolent hope, perhaps a little worldly, and, whether the thing be desirable or undesirable, there is not much certainty that it will ever come. St. Paul is not ignorant that peace, in the sense of freedom from external conflict—the kind of security, for example, that many nineteenth-century religious people used to expect as a thing almost assured—may not be theirs. Man can never command it; Christians can hardly claim it; he probably does not think that the Roman Christians are likely ever to obtain it. But there is a peace in the kingdom of the soul, which he expects for them with confidence. Why? Because the other half of his blessing is expressed in specifically Christian language. It is a prayer that they may have that which will ensure the inward peace, that with which he believes that God is always ready to crown the need of humble faith. It is a prayer for such reinforcement of their natural characters as will make them both strong and beautiful. He is sure that they will not wonder at this confidence, because, like him, they too are accustomed to think of God as Father and they have taken Jesus Christ as the Lord of their life.

¹ This first section is rather different from those which follow. It was not broadcast; it is reprinted from a book called *Supernatural Religion* (Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1932), and it appears here by courtesy of the publishers. This fact explains the partial use of the third person.

This faith and this allegiance, which he shares with them, have had in him an effect so deep and so transforming that he is unable to keep silence. His vocation has taken such a hold upon him, his message so inhabits him, that, whether they like it or not, he cannot refrain from claiming their attention. "For I," he exclaims, "am Christ's man, utterly and for ever. I am His servant. He is my Master. It is not too much to say that He possesses me, and I acknowledge His right to do with me as He wills. That which in point of fact He has done with me is a thing at which I never cease to marvel. It is this. Though I had done nothing to deserve it, and indeed much to forfeit it, He has called to me out of heaven and has given me a commission. He might have rejected me; He might have passed me by; I could not complain if I had been allowed to suffer infinitely more than I have suffered; it would have been unspeakable generosity if He had made me the humblest of His doorkeepers. But He has made me an Apostle.

"Let me remind you of what that means. The original genesis of Christian apostleship lies far back in the pages of the Old Testament. There are in those pages many promises. These promises have, in all that matters, been performed, and the terms of my commission are an obligation to shout aloud in the hearing of all the world the news of this divine fulfilment. You know, of course, what it is. Jesus Christ, who inherited, legally and humanly, nothing but the barren glory of descent from David, had, beyond and within that, another heritage. While He lived in the life of the earth it was unknown or faintly guessed, though there was that in the utter perfection of His being which might have told the secret. But at His resurrection from the dead it became manifest that the true definition of power is not force, but spiritual excellence, and that Jesus was in very truth the Son of God.

"Everything comes from that—my own call, the forgiveness of my sin, my status as an Apostle, the extraordinary wide-world commission that I have received, and finally the right that I now exercise in addressing you. The name of Jesus is the only name that signifies and, by itself, suffices. No other name has power to save,

or could be a warrant for my boldness. I know that I have that to say which the world needs. The world of culture and the world of non-culture, those who would despise me for my *naïveté* and those who would be bored or puzzled by my tumultuous sentences and my recondite terminology—all of them have a right to hear it. When I think of the tidings that are pent in me I forget that my worldly status is only that of an obscure provincial. I lose all diffidence. I am not Paul. I am a cause. I am the cause of Christ. I am passionately aware of one thing and one thing only. Not even the forlorn picture of a Cilician nobody standing alone at the gates of the central citadel of civilization can dim its glory in my mind. The thing that fills the horizon and lightens the whole firmament is the fact that Christ can save every man who is willing to be saved by Him.

“Why do I make this astounding statement that Christ can save every man, can heal all infirmity, can turn even the worst sickness into perfect wholesomeness? Because of what Christ is. He is no mere product of development, the fortunate consequence of some larger bubble of a stream of blind—or even providential—progress. Nor is He the transient, desultory flash of casual charity from a heaven which was struck with a momentary pity for our evil case, the sudden dole flung by celestial sentiment to relieve sufferings which pained whenever they were noticed. He is the embodiment of a goodness so steady, so unprovokable, so unfailing, and withal so just, that He reflects for us—nay, in so far as human life can do it, He contains—the very character and self of God. And this quality He conveys to us. He has brought to us the touch of the love of God, with its adoption into sonship, its initial consecration, and its effectual summons to a life of continual and increasing holiness. It is born of His own faith in us. It is accepted as we begin to have faith in Him. It goes in us from strength to strength, but at the end of its development, after long years of happy and devout believing, its last and greatest word is still only ‘I believe.’”

CHAPTER II

(iii. 1-8)

I HAVE been speaking of those who have centuries of spiritual tradition, and of those who have not. The obvious examples in our day are the Jew and the heathen, and I have spoken of them at some length, but you know as well as I do that my words can have, and are intended to have, a larger application. They are true of any two sets of people, of whom some, like the workmen in the Master's parable, have been employed all day, and others are only drawn in, if at all, at a late hour. You might call them the Old Guard and the Newcomers. Well, what is the good of having been there all the time? I have spoken with severity of the moral state of both, and I have acknowledged that there are good heathens, and I withdraw no word of that. Is it then worth while to be of the Old Guard? Yes, indeed it is. That ancient rite of circumcision, which distinguishes Jew from Gentile, does genuinely admit to a state of spiritual advantage. Initial advantage is, of course, nothing if it be not followed up, but it is, or can be, the beginning of a condition of high privilege.

First of all, the Old Guard has the Scriptures, those authentic records of time after time when the Voice of God has spoken to the sons of men. The Old Guard has inherited those precious promises. That stands, as evidence that God has spoken. Even if the custodians fumble with their inheritance, if they lack the faculty with which the gift must be received and used, that does not impair the validity of the gift. A divine promise is a divine promise. Whatever happens in the world of men, God does not fail. Remember the old Psalm, "I said in my haste, all men are liars." Well, perhaps good King David was rather hasty. All men are not liars. But even if they were, if all the people in the world combined to bear false witness of God, if all mankind turned atheist, if every voice

shrieked blasphemy, it would grieve the Holy Spirit of God, but it would not make one iota of difference to the unchanging Reality of God. That stands, if all the world goes mad.

Another Psalm, the superb 51st Psalm, puts it very audaciously. The Psalmist actually supposes that God is on trial, the defendant in a court of law. It is, of course, an extravagant hypothesis, but if it can be imagined, there could be only one result. God emerges from any and every scrutiny triumphant, with His Glory, His Majesty, His Truth, His Justice, unstained and unstainable.

At this point someone scents a weakness in my argument. If human frailty only throws into high relief the divine steadfastness, can God fairly condemn men for being frail? His own glory is thereby enhanced. Is it not rather a good thing? This is a specious objection, but no one who knows anything about God would ever raise it. The fact, as both he and I and you all know perfectly well, is that God is always the Judge and the sole Judge. There would not be any standard without God.

But someone else puts the same objection in a more subtle way. Granted, he says, that God is the righteous Judge, yet if I by my sin enhance His glory should I not be commended? No, that is just as wrong. No one who has at all understood the vileness of sin could ever talk like that. People do charge me with indifference to moral considerations, because I insist so much on faith, and because I believe so intensely in forgiveness, but it is utterly false to say that I have ever compromised on right and wrong. I know that God loves to forgive, and I know that any sin can be forgiven, but I have never paltered with ethical standards. I know that good, by the mercy of God, may come out of evil, but I have never said, "Let us sin in order that God may have opportunity of forgiving us." That would be to tempt the Lord our God. It is never a good thing to have sinned. Anyone who says so is making a wicked and fatal mistake.

CHAPTER III

(iii. 9-23)

MUST we conclude that the Old Guard are positively worse than the Newcomers? No, not that. It is a bad business, but it is not so depressing as that. The conclusion is simply that both are guilty. Comparisons are said to be odious, and in any case are here not worth making. Jew and Gentile, we are all sinners. The old Scriptures are very plain-spoken about that. Remember the Psalms and their testimony. It is not one isolated case, of one disappointed man. I am thinking of half a dozen different passages. The Psalmists declare that they cannot find one godly person, not even one. Every man Jack of them has wandered off the road. They are futile. They are incapable of doing good. Poison is in their lips, and cursing and lying on their tongue. They shed innocent blood. Wherever they go they spread misery and wretchedness. Of peace they know nothing, and there is no fear of God before their eyes.

It is a terrible indictment. And remember, it is launched against the Old Guard. These judgments in the Scriptures are spoken of those to whom the Scriptures came. The Bible does not waste its strength in blaming those who are not there. It, so to speak, addresses the congregation. And the purpose of this is the deliberate purpose of stopping every protesting or apologizing mouth, and bringing all mankind, without exception, under the judgment of the Almighty. All flesh is guilty. None shall be counted righteous before God. Works of the Law do not avail to earn a favourable verdict. That is from another Psalm, the 132nd. You may think that I have perhaps here begged the question. The Psalmist does not actually mention works of the Law. You may think that I dragged that in. But you must remember that the Psalmist lived under the Law. That was all he had. And if *he* says that no flesh

can be counted righteous before God, he means not even by virtue of obedience to the Law.

As a matter of fact, the Law, in the first instance, made things worse. That is why I speak even more hardly of the Old Guard than of the Newcomers. They knew. The Law taught people about sin. It made them aware that there was such a thing. And, so far, it was depressing. But what has happened now is that, outside the Law, apart from all question of injunction and prohibition, a wholly new kind of righteousness has been revealed to a wondering world. It does not say, "How many commandments have you kept?" Answer, "All, or nearly all." "Very good; go up top." It says something much more marvellous and much more divine than that. It says, "Do you pledge yourself solely and utterly to Christ?"

I said just now, "outside the Law." I meant, "Not by legal means, not by any acquisition of merit through observing statutes." In another sense it is very far from being unconnected with the Law. The Law, and the Prophets too, on every page bear witness to the Deliverance which God continually purposed to send in the fullness of time. The Law is not itself the Real Thing, but it does bear consistent witness to the promised coming of the Real Thing. And now the Real Thing has come. It is Christ. The longed-for words "Not Guilty" are heard by those who are His, who stand in a true relation towards Him. He strikes off their fetters, He breaks the prison doors, He lifts them to the happy level where they hear the emancipating verdict, "Prisoner at the Bar, you may go free."

And this is for all: the Old Guard, the heathen of to-day, the unborn children of to-morrow or of all the years to come. We all need it. We have all failed. The Glory of God shines on the world, but we have not caught the radiance. We do not reflect it. We are not transfigured. And so the Gospel meets a universal need.

CHAPTER IV

(iii. 23-26)

I SAY that we all need the acquitting verdict. And it is not by any effort to be earned. No one deserves it. No one can claim it. *And so* God freely gives it. Gives it by His free, unmerited, royal bounty, His mere will and pleasure. God has redeemed the world through Christ. Redeemed ! What do I mean by that ? The word itself means "brought back." And, indeed, there was an old Hebrew custom by which all the first-born, human and animal alike, were considered to belong to God. They ought therefore to be offered in sacrifice, but it was lawful to substitute another offering of smaller value, and so to buy back, as it were, the eldest son, or calf or other creature. In my use of the word there is perhaps some faint echo of that practice. But the main uses of the word in the Scriptures are of the Exodus from Egypt and the Return from Captivity in Babylon. There was in either case no payment, no question of a price. The real core of the meaning of Redemption is Deliverance, Emancipation. Christ has delivered man from the power of evil. Mind you, it was not an easy deliverance. It was costly. To achieve it the divine Saviour poured out His precious life upon the Cross. But there was no bargain with the devil. And if anyone hereafter should ever hint at such a thing, he will be pressing a metaphor overhard, and traducing, not my doctrine only, but the Glory of God.

Christ ransomed us. God meant it to be so. In the old Tabernacle there was the Mercy-Seat, with the two Cherubim of glory, one on either side, making an arch of angel-wings. The High Priest on the solemn Day of Atonement, when he pleaded for the sin of the whole people, sprinkled this Mercy-Seat with sacrificial blood. Thus, it was held, could sinful man draw near God. The blood of sacrifice was his warrant of approach. We know, of course,

that the blood of a slain animal is nothing. But our Lord, by His sacrifice, has made for us a way into the pardoning grace of God. His was a truly spiritual sacrifice. His blood, shed on the Cross, is the red seal of it. There is the true Mercy-Seat. And the power of faith is such that by faith a man can unite himself with the divine Victim, and in that union enter into the blessed state of at-one-ment with the Father.

Now, why was this extremity of sacrifice required? Why could not God simply proclaim that He had forgiven all sin? Why, because that would have been wholly unspiritual, mechanical, meaningless, like moving a lever or turning a tap. Forgiveness is a spiritual thing. It demands will or purpose in the giver and the receiver. To announce a wholesale forgiveness would have been quite futile, and wholly unworthy of the divine righteousness. You see, it was like this. Mankind had sinned, and sinned, and sinned, and the whole face of human history was black with the tale of his iniquity. And God had done nothing, so far as could be seen. And man began to say, "God doesn't care." Well, here, in the Cross, is the supreme sign that God does care. Sin is a thing so dreadful that it has brought God the Son to this. Not someone else, mind you, other than God, bearing a punishment inflicted by an offended Deity, but God the Son, in whom the Father lives, and feels, and demonstrates His love and mercy. The Cross exhibits, as we all know, the Love of God. Yes, but it also manifests His Righteousness. God could not pretend that sin was anything but hateful. It was hateful, and it had become to man an intolerable burden. Man could not bear it. Very well, God will Himself bear it. This vindicates divine Justice, and it opens a door of faith, through which sinful man can enter, can separate himself from his own sin, and be reunited with his God.

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CHAPTER V

(vi. 1-11)

I TAKE up again a point that I began to make before. If the long history of sinful man has this glorious conclusion, the advent of the Saviour and the forgiveness of sin, if there is in God this marvellous readiness to forgive, shall we stimulate it, and give the divine faculty something to operate upon? In a word, shall we heap up more sin in order that God may have more to forgive? Perish the thought. We could not possibly. We saw, at conversion, not merely the error of our ways, but the hatefulness of sin and the blackness of our own souls. We there and then died to all that. It is dead. We could not for a moment entertain the idea of reviving it. How could we, with our experience, begin to live sinfully again? How could we be satisfied with that, and have our existence in it? It is unthinkable. We are baptized members of Christ's Body. That Baptism meant going down beneath the waters. Spiritually, that is, so far as purpose is concerned, it was a descent with Christ into His grave. It was the death and burial of our old life. That is now all done with. And you know what happened after His Death and Burial. The glory of the Father shone down into the dark places of the world of after-death and raised Him to a new and far more splendid life. So those who share Christ's Death in Baptism share also Christ's Resurrection. That is what the mystical union with Christ means. The glory of the Father touches us, and we are raised to a new and better life. It was said of Saul and Jonathan that they were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in death they were not divided. Our Lord reverses this. His Death was tragic and terrible. Earth shuddered, and the sky went black. Our Baptism too was in its way a tragedy. It involved cutting loose from all the old life, with its worldly and fleshly and devilish satisfactions. It was death. There was much that had to be crucified. But then—for Him, a

glorious Resurrection; for us, new life. The old man, the unregenerate man, who had seemed so vigorous and healthy, died. It had to be. He was a sinful fellow. It was useless to try to persuade him to become a little better, a shade or two less sinful. He had to be exterminated. The root of his being was corrupt. The only thing was regeneration. Baptism did that. Baptism set us free from the old bondage, which otherwise would never have been broken. Death clears all obligations. The writ of Satan does not now run against us. We are out of his range. You can almost fancy his summonses and demand-notes being returned to him marked "Dead."

Death, in that sense, is the last word so far as Satan is concerned. That lien is for ever broken. But it is not the last word for us. For us it was a beginning. Christ's Risen Life is eternal—that is, not merely endless, but supernatural, heavenly. Our Christian life, which began as we rose up from the Baptismal water, has something of the eternal quality. Christ died, and, by His dying and rising, conquered death. It has no longer any hold on Him. He died a mortal death. That death broke the power of sin. He need not stand now sword in hand, fighting against evil. There is now no pressure upon Him from that quarter. He has won the victory for ever, and His life is wholly Godward. And the union—in Life we are not divided—of baptized persons with Christ is such that they too have a resurrection-life. They are not indeed sinless, because they fall below their ideal. But, ideally, they have said good-bye to sin. At least, they are not under its dominion, as they once were. Their life now looks towards God. They are members of Christ's Body. His Life is a Risen Life. So, in its measure, is theirs. His eyes are directed Godwards. So are theirs.

CHAPTER VI

(vi. 12-19)

You must think of yourselves as alive, with your gaze directed Godwards, by virtue of your membership of the Body of Christ. What follows? It follows that you must consider your allegiance. Christ is your King. You are His men, sworn and pledged. That physical body of yours, that "poor relation" of your spirit, is, as we all know, a feeble instrument. Above all, it is mortal. The time will come when the last breath will have left it, and it will lie cold and stark in a bed. Yet for the moment it is your instrument, with which to serve. Those pricking lusts. You must not heed them. You must conquer them. And by that I do not mean crush them, or stamp them out, or pretend that they are not part of you. I mean that you must *use* them, *direct* them to some noble purpose. Do not drift into the feeble habit of letting your physical faculties get out of control and serve bad purposes. The devil will whisper in your ear that it is "natural." That is one of his favourite lies. To believe that, to act on that, is to miss the mark. Gather up all your faculties, and yield them, present them, an offering to God. Remember, you are alive. You died, and now you are alive. Men who have risen from death are better men than they were. They have something worth offering. You may not think that the work of your hands, the journeys on which your feet take you, your sex-life, and the words you speak or write, are very important. But they are. You are making, day by day, and hour by hour, munitions for a gigantic world-warfare of good against evil. The Owner and Master of the Works is God. It would be the blackest treachery to commit acts of *sabotage*. I say treachery, not mere ordinary wickedness. It would be, not just the breaking of a commandment, but the betrayal of an honourable trust. You are not hirelings, wage-earners, who can resign their job if they like. You are children of the Love of God.

Again I ask, shall we presume on that? There is always the temptation to take advantage of the fact that the constitution of the Body of Christ is not a legal one, and to say, "We are free and so we are at liberty to sin." Dismiss the idea from your minds, if it has crept in. You are not wage-earners, because in this occupation there are no wages, given or received. But you are in a service. And if you serve the wrong cause, it means that you are serving the wrong master. You can, if you choose, serve the ends of sin. It is a bad cause, and the end of it is death. But the thing can be done. The business really exists, and the paymaster is the devil. You can, if you like, become his slaves. But there is also another service, an emancipating, enfranchizing service. Obedience to that service leads into the happy kingdom of the Good, the Beautiful, the True. And I thank God that, whereas you once were in bondage, tied and bound in chains of sin, you made the great act of obedience in the right direction. You did all this from the bottom of your heart. The old drill-book was flung aside, and you yielded yourselves gladly to a new voice of command and new marching orders. It set you free at last from sin. It made you servants of the Good Cause.

I have to speak in this way, as if there were two equal and parallel services. I have to, partly because human language is the only language that we have, and partly because I want to make it easier for you by using human illustrations, even of divine things. In fact, the two things are wholly incommensurable. The one is a mean, pettifogging service to a rebel angel, the other to the Creator. The one is just a death, the other is the Life indeed. The one is a matter of carnal wars, the other is a divine gift.

CHAPTER VII

(vii. 1-7)

I HAVE been speaking for the most part of bondage to moral evil. I turn now to another kind of bondage, that of legalism. I still have in mind the larger categories that I have called the Old Guard and the Newcomers. But the classical example of a legal system of ethics is the Law of Moses; and, moreover, I myself am a Jew, brought up strictly under the Law. Accordingly, my words now will have a particular reference to that. In what I say about it there is much actual recollection of my own early experience as an eager but unsatisfied zealot for the Law, but it is also no doubt coloured by subsequent reflection about the fundamental difference between Law and Grace.

I begin with another human illustration, from the institution of marriage. You know, of course, that the law of marriage, or of anything else, binds people while they live. A wife, for example, is bound to cleave to her husband till death do them part. If she were to join herself to another man while her husband lived she would be stigmatized as an adulteress. In the event of his death, she is at liberty, and may marry another man.

It is a commonplace and not particularly noble example, but it illustrates my point. And indeed the application is better than the illustration. For it is not that the death of A has set B free. It is that you are A, and you yourself have died. Or, if you like, A is your old self, and that is dead. You were bound to the Law. It held you in an iron grip. All you could do was to obey. Membership of the Body of Christ has released you. You are free. You have, if I may so put it, a new Husband. And there is also a kind of newness about Him. He is risen from death. There is before Him—I know, of course, that “before” is really meaningless when it is said of the divine, but we have no other language—there is before

Him endless life. From now your Risen Lord and you together will be fruitful, and the issue of this spiritual marriage will be for the service and glory of God. There was an issue of the old marriage, a bad one. Sin was at work, stimulating the passions—and the Law, which meant so well, was not without its share of the responsibility—and the result was that the body was tempted into sin. The progeny of that union was “By Evil out of Weakness,” and there was none to profit by it except Death. It filled his dismal and unholy vaults. But now all that is ended. You are discharged. The Law has no hold on you. You died to it. You are free men. And the result of this is that you can serve—yes, serve, because there is still service to be done—with freshness. The old Law was written, and there it was. You rendered your measure of obedience, and the transaction was, so to speak, closed. Now you are sons of the Spirit. Your obedience comes welling up from the depths of your nature, inexhaustible, better and better all the time, and fresh every time, *as if you had just thought of it*. That is the difference between the Pentateuch and Pentecost. The old Law was written in a book. The Spirit is a Breath.

I said that the Law itself was not without its share of responsibility. How so? Is the Law itself an evil thing? Far from it. Nevertheless, it is a fact that the Law introduces man—I know it introduced me—to the idea of sinning. The Law said “Desire not,” and I began to think, “Desire, desire. What is that? It sounds good. I will desire, I do desire.” The Law itself was innocent enough; but Law is never the best method of overcoming the demon of sin, always on the look-out for fresh fields of activity, taking advantage of innocence and ignorance. Christ has provided a better way.

CHAPTER VIII

(vii. 8-20)

BEFORE the entry of Law there is no such thing as sin. It has no existence. It is not dead as that which has ceased to live. It is dead as that which has not yet begun to live. Accordingly, before I knew anything about Law, I was, in a sense, alive. I lived a care-free, pagan child-life. (Let me explain again that, when I say "I," I mean partly myself, but I also mean Everyman. The experience of each individual is a sort of recapitulation of the experience of the race.) This unawakened life is for everyone—it was for me—a happy, innocent state. No one had said to me, "Don't." Then, like a sledge-hammer, came the Commandments—"Don't, Don't, Don't." Sin at once sprang into existence. There I was, a sinner, breaking the Commandments right and left. I had been doing it all my life, but I had not been exactly guilty, because I did not know. But now, there it was in black and white, mostly black. I, so to speak, fell dead. I was a sinner, under the wrath of God, in despair. Those Commandments, which meant so well, which did really point the way to righteousness, to life, had the effect of sentencing me to death. It was not their fault. Sin used them. I was staggering under the shock of those tremendous prohibitions. I was nervous. I had an inferiority complex. And sin got past my guard, and, with the very weapon that Moses had intended to be my staff and stay, pierced me to the heart. I was a dead man. I do not blame Moses. I do not blame the Law. The Law is true. It is even a holy Law; it points in the direction of righteousness and goodness. But it is only a Law, not a Gospel. By reason of two things, the unscrupulousness of Satan and my weakness, it was no good to me.

I say again, I am not accusing the Law. It was not the Law that killed me. It would be impious to say that. The Law was God's

Law. It was a necessary stage in the education of mankind. Man had to learn the sinfulness of sin. We had to have the object-lesson of sin harnessing even those admirable Commandments to its own base purposes, and by means of them turning man into a sinner. We had to learn how tricky and resourceful Satan is. Even the Law is a weapon in his soul-destroying hands. The Law itself is one of God's instruments, spiritual, that is, instinct with purpose, and, moreover, a purpose for good. The weak point that Satan found was in me, in man. Man is frail flesh, and sin easily establishes a sort of right over him. Man ceases to be his own master. He becomes sin's hireling, unable to control himself, doing he doesn't know what. Why, I myself—and this is true of us all—find that there are things which I hate—yes, truly and genuinely hate—but I do them. My will, in the abstract, is sound enough. I do not want to be on the devil's side, but I find myself there. I hear the words, "Thou shalt have none other gods but Me," and I cry aloud, "That's right. That is what I believe. The Law is good." And then, in practice, I crumple up. I say, "*I* crumple up," but the truth is that I seem to have a sort of divided personality. The real "*I*" is for God and His cause, but sin has invaded me, and somehow continues to speak through my lips and act by my hands. Apart from the grace of God my worse self is the stronger—but with God's grace my better self can triumph.

CHAPTER IX

(vii. 21-viii 5)

My natural humanity seems powerless for good. It has its better moments, its good desires, but they do not get action. I want to do good things, but in practice I find myself doing things that I know to be wrong, things that I hate. "Yield," says Fiend. "Yield not," says Conscience. And I yield. That shews me that sin has come to inhabit me, and is in possession. It seems to be a kind of Law. There is, of course, the holy Law of God, about which I have said so much, but there seems to be another law, which runs through human nature. We form good desires, but as they start up, and prepare to run out into the world, and get busy, and achieve something, the hideous giant sin stands, club in hand, by the door, ready to smite them into ineffectiveness. The Law of God wins my assent. Conscience is all for it. But there is this other law—not really a law, thank God, but a devastating series of observed instances, which has a cruel hold on me. It fights with the good law, the law which my conscience approves, it takes me captive, it even makes me think that it is a real law that binds me. I cannot tell which way to turn. I am desperate. I can find no salvation. Misery ! Misery ! This earthly life of mine is held in a fatal grip. Who will deliver me ?

So, in my agony, I reasoned. Thank God, I know the answer now. Christ is the Deliverer, and He has delivered me. But grace apart, there is this terrible divided loyalty, the two laws, the two masters. Conscience would choose one; flesh chooses the other.

I have attempted to recapture all this old experience in order to analyse my former self and to illustrate what I believe to be the way of all flesh, if it be not sanctified by grace. But it is a recapture of what was. It is all over. Grace has prevailed. I am now, as any man alive might be, among those who are "in Christ." Against

them no sentence lies. They are free of the world. Another law, not that of sin, not even that of Moses, has released them, unfettered them, disenthralled them. Another law, do I say? I don't know why I call it a law. It is liberty. The words of Christ are spirit and are life. Christ has said, "Go free." The reign of sin is over, and the fear of death is gone. The incredible victory, the thing that law could never do, because it was always being betrayed by the weakness of the human subject, has been achieved. From the very throne and bosom of the Father came the Son, made one of us in all but sin, no phantom but real flesh, and yet not sinful flesh, to fight with sin in the flesh. Yes, in the flesh, in the frail medium where sin had won so many victories, there the Son of God conquered him at last and proclaimed him beaten. There at last was human flesh that would not yield to sin. In that way the just demand of law that righteousness should somehow be attained is met, not by the everlasting impotence of flesh to achieve for itself the victory, but by the glad, confident steps of those who have been made to walk on the high places of the spiritual life.

CHAPTER X

(viii. 5-17)

THOSE who are content merely to ask, "What does the flesh say?" will build up a life-structure which knows of nothing beyond fleshly desires. Those who ask, "What does the spirit say?" will grow to be at home in the supernatural world of spirit. I called the first a life-structure, but death-dungeon would have been a better name. It destroys. To listen to the promptings of the spirit is to breathe the breath of life and to taste the beatitude of peace. The other kind is hard, angular, inimical to God, defying His Will. Is that too severe? No, it has to be said. The carnal mind hates God. It must be so. Between its standards and the good pleasure of the Father is a great gulf fixed.

But you, my friends, are on God's side of this gulf. You belong to the world of the spirit, not of the flesh. If God's spirit has His habitation in you, that makes you spiritual men. Christian men, Christ's men, are spiritual men. A man in whom the Spirit of Christ is not would be no Christian. But if there dwells in us the Spirit of Christ—and that means, of course, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself in the Person of that Holy Spirit by whom alone in this post-Pentecostal era He communicates Himself to us—what follows? Is it a fleshly satisfaction? No; the flesh is mortal. It is, if eternal life be in question, even now dead by reason of sin. But the spirit is not dead. The spirit is living. It is more than that. It is life. It shares in the divine life. It is by the grace of God accounted righteous. Righteousness is a desire after life. Grace gives even that.

But there is more. This flesh of ours is a poor thing. I called it dead just now. But it can live. God raised our Lord from death. The same power is still available. It will quicken even these frail bodies of ours, which are riddled with sin and will anyhow some

day crumble into dust. Think of it ! What a miracle ! The spirit of man is immortal. Yes, we know that. But the faith of the Incarnation is so audaciously, so gloriously materialist—in the best sense—that when the question is asked, “ Who then shall live ? ” not only is there heard the triumphant expectation of the spirit of man, but even the body of man pipes up and says, “ I too shall live.” Whence this amazing confidence ? The Spirit of God dwells in you, and your body is part of you. Not even the poor old body will be forgotten in that day.

What, then, is the obligation ? It is to live, not according to the standards of the flesh—that leads to death—but so to bring to bear the power of the Spirit on the doings even of the body that the breath comes into them, and they live, and stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army. An army of the sons of God. For you are not slaves. You have no need to cower and shrink, as a slave does, for fear of the master’s blow. We can look up, like happy children, into the Father’s eyes. Words form themselves on our lips, and whether the speech be the old Semitic tongue of Abraham and Moses, or we turn to our Christian use the language that Sophocles and Plato spoke, we say “ Our Father.” And it gets home. It arrives. It reaches heaven. The Spirit of God answers the call. The Spirit of God takes up our feeble words, accepts them, and thus testifies that we are sons indeed. We are qualified to inherit all that God will give, sharing the inheritance that Christ has won for us, partners with Him in His Cross and Passion, and partners in His glory.

CHAPTER XI

(viii. 18-25)

THOSE who are Christ's must suffer. What of that? Who cares about that? Such sufferings are nothing. They are but on the surface. They are but for the moment. They have no weight when there is set against them the prospect of that glory which, as it streams from the King of Glory, the Everlasting Son, will compass and envelop the redeemed. It will be revealed to them, and it will pass into their being, a garment of praise and the virtue of their interior life. How we long for that consummation! You know how a horse, a noble thoroughbred, straining towards the goal, will stretch his neck and reach out his eager head to gain some painful inch. So the whole world of things created would seem to be longing for the day when the forward, upward stretch of man will be met and crowned by the unveiling of the glory that shall be, when the sons of men, at long last, are re-created into the perfect sonship which the perfect Son of God has won for them. There is, in this life, a sort of curse upon all creation. It has gone awry. It is barren. It is futile. It would fain do better, but it has somehow lost the power. Ours is a fallen world, fallen by reason of the sin and fall of man. Did not the Lord say, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake"? And the divine justice, which cannot pretend that sin is aught but sinful, has made earth's wheels drive heavily.

Yet there is hope. Creation has been caught in the toils of human sin, creation is poisoned by the corruption of man's heart. But there will be deliverance. Creation will in due time be emancipated alike from its chains and from its stains. It was infected by the Fall of Man, and it will share in man's re-creation. And Nature, poor old Nature, which was dragged down by man, will drink of that cup of freedom which redeemed man will pour out upon the ground, and Man and Nature will be renewed together.

For the time being creation is in travail. The old world is exhausted, the new world cannot yet be born. It is in agony. Mother Nature seems to groan aloud. The children are come almost to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. Poor Mother Nature, so innocent, yet so afflicted! And all by reason of the Fall of Man. Father Adam, Father Adam, how much you have to answer for! Why, we ourselves, the baptized, regenerated people, are still held in the trammels of the old life. The Spirit of God has come on us. He sanctifies the elect people. His presence is the warrant that the good desires will one day be crowned with victory, and that we shall have the abiding beatific vision of which we here catch glimpses now and then. But we are still pent in the flesh. We are not yet adopted into the fullness of the promised inheritance. The body is not yet redeemed from sin. It stumbles, and grows weary, and lacks the strength to persevere. So we can only hope.

Still, hope is a good friend.

“White-handed hope,
Thou hovering angel, girt with golden wings.”

Hope comes to the rescue when there is no help in sight. And that, of course, is the part of hope. You don't hope for what you see, or for what you hold in your hands. You hope for the invisible, for the not yet grasped. Well, let us go on hoping. So we shall learn endurance. We shall learn to wait. Hope is a gift of God. By hope He teaches us day by day, till we are ready to have the fruition of His glorious Godhead.

CHAPTER XII

(viii. 26-30)

DURING the long pilgrimage, while we are learning to wait and practise patience, we are not left alone. As I said just now, our possession of, or rather our being possessed by, the Holy Spirit teaches us to use aright the discipline of life, bridges for us the gap between present and future, between life here and life in the eternal world. We cannot of ourselves compass the great adventure. Man's puny strength goes nowhere. Our prayers are so feeble. And they are ill-directed. Man's prayers, above all his petitions, are apt to be foolish and indiscriminate. Just there, where the need is greatest, where man, attempting to do the highest thing, breaks down most utterly, the Holy Spirit of God takes charge. Man has his inarticulate desires, his wistful sense of need, his sighing and groaning for some better way of life. The Holy Spirit has in the beginning planted those yearnings in him, and it is now the work of the Holy Spirit to render them explicit. Think of some simple petition, such as might be addressed to the Father, to our Saviour Christ, and to the Spirit, like "Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy." The first might be in the direction of obedience to the Father's Will; the second an effort after that Christlike character that should be forming in us and in all men; the third an expression of those faint, inarticulate desires which redeem us from complete futility. The Holy Spirit takes those stammering syllables and turns them into something that is recognizable as the language of approach to God. We can draw near to God above because of God within, and God above receives the ungainly salutations that we offer to His Divine Majesty because He discerns behind them the inspiration and the fostering care and guardianship of His own Spirit, God within. The Spirit intercedes for God's children in a way that is after God's own heart. So by the Spirit's aid the children reach the heart of God.

Who can deny this? After all, the world is God's world. If you love God, you will know that what He wills is best.

“In His will is our peace.”

It may be difficult. It may be painful. There is no kind of guarantee that it will be what you or anybody else might choose. But it will be good, and, if you love God, you will know that. You see, there is the divine purpose, and you are among those whom His purpose has called. I am not talking now of any sort of predestination. Let no one suppose that I have in mind a fixed and immutable decree, determined before the world began, which man cannot break, a decree that some shall be saved and some shall be damned. Man cannot indeed break the power of God, but he can of his own volition pass from one region of it to another, from the sunshine of divine approval to the clouds of divine judgment. Yet, if we can cling to it, the beneficent purpose is a sure thing. God knew you for one of His creatures from the first moment of your existence. His design for you was that you should grow after the Christ-pattern. His Christ was not given to stand alone, but to be Head of the Church, and, at long last, Head of a regenerated world. This purpose is itself a call to us. No sooner do we become aware of it than we must spring forward in response. The fact that God has called you means that He counts you worthy to begin. The initial verdict has been uttered: “Give him a place in the procession. Let him begin.” And that means that, if all goes as it should do, your feet are on the road that winds upwards to a summit. It is the road to the City of God.

CHAPTER XIII

(viii. 31-end)

THAT, then, is the divine plan. What can we say to it? Surely, yes, a thousand times yes. Nothing else matters. The Lord God hath spoken; who can but prophesy? The Lord God is on our side, and that is enough. No obstacle can daunt us, no enemy can make us fear. God has given the extremest pledge of His favour and good will towards us. He has yielded up the Son of His Love. He would not keep His Beloved in the sublime security of Heaven. He gave Him to the life of earth and to the death of shame. Does not this mean that, with the Beloved, all things are ours? The Giver of the Incarnate Son will not withhold from us His Grace. We are the people of His covenant, citizens of His charter, sons of His compassion. Let the accuser launch his charges. They will fall harmless to the ground. The Judge of all the world has set our feet upon the way of righteousness. There is no other court that can reverse that verdict. Think of Christ Crucified. There, in those twisted limbs, and on that broken heart, is the sure gage, the sign-manual of God's love. And remember that the Crucified is now Risen. He is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. It is His voice which says all the time, "Father, remember those for whom I died." That precious Death, that mighty Resurrection, that glorious Ascension, that Good Shepherdly pleading at the right hand of God, that marvellous series of creative acts, has forged a union that cannot be broken. The love of Christ has gathered us, and no power, save that of our own defiant will, can tear us from His keeping. You may in this world be ground down by affliction. You may be pressed into a corner. The savagery of the persecutor may torment you. You may go hungry. You may be stripped of your apparel, and left naked to the world. You may be in dire peril of your life. The sword may glitter at your throat.

What of it? What is death, or the fear of death? There is a verse in the Psalms which says that the martyrs in a holy cause are counted as sheep for the slaughter, and yet they hold on. The words may be those of David, prince of Psalmists, or they may come out of that distressful period when our fathers under the doughty Judas Maccabæus fought a holy war against the Syrian oppressor. Anyhow, we win. We more than win. Victory is a slight and trivial word. We are not marching over a field of battle into a defeated city. We are borne on the wings of faith into the empyrean of the love of Christ.

I am not a man to use words lightly. I was once the enemy of Christ, and I have critics now who watch me closely. I always choose my words. And I say it is my profound and absolute conviction that Christ holds me in a clasp which will not be unloosed. Death cannot part us. Christ has conquered death, and is the Lord of death and life. There is nothing in either death or life so strong as He. There is no power in the celestial hierarchy—

Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers—

that can prevail against His purpose. The world of things created, as it is to-day, or in whatever form it may please God to give it in days to come, is impotent to divide me from my Lord. Go up into the height above. Go down to the depth beneath. Search all creation, and you will find no power that can undo the holy tie. What God hath joined, nothing can put asunder.

**A PARAPHRASE OF ST. PAUL'S
EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS**

CHAPTER I

1 My dear people of Philippi :

This comes from your friend Paul, and Brother Timothy joins with me in all good wishes. You know me, and you know that my claim to write is simply that I am the servant of Jesus, our Anointed King, bound in His service to the uttermost limit of obedience. And you too are His, a chosen community, whom He Himself has called and set apart to be a white spot in a dingy world. I think of you, living in your beautiful and famous city. I imagine to myself your Church-life, your work-life, your home-life, day by day. You have your officers, those whose duty it is to oversee your ways and those who exercise subordinate ministries. I salute them, and I salute you all. With them you are the Church of God at Philippi. 2 God bless you. May the Fatherhood of God perpetually sustain you. May the Saviourhood of Christ perpetually encompass you. May the divine assistance perpetually guard you, and direct your feet into the way of peace.

3 You did not think, I am sure, that I had forgotten you. Far from it. I continually remember all of you. And all the time, whenever I think of you, my remembrance turns into prayer. I think of you and in my mind I hold you before God, and that is prayer. 4 I have of course my requests and petitions for you, but I find that before I come to that I must always begin with giving thanks. You see, there is so much in you that makes me thankful. My prayers about you are

very happy, eager prayers. 5 For we are partners, you and I. We have been partners since that first day when I came to Philippi. You did not know me, and I knew nothing about you. But that wonderful Good News, which I announced and you believed, that has been our link from the beginning. We are still partners in the same enterprise. 6 The end is not yet, but I am utterly confident that you will persevere. What tells me this? My faith in God. God began it. God does not leave off doing what He has begun to do. Therefore He will finish it. It was a good day's work when God first set your feet in the road of discipleship. He is not going to let you down. There is, as you know, another day ahead, a Day of days, when the Lord Christ, Vice-Gerent of the Father, will bring to an end this period of waiting and probation, and will consummate His Kingdom in a blaze of glory. Till then God will still have you in His keeping, and you will continue in His service. 7 I know this. I am entitled to talk like this. It is not idle boasting. It is not extravagance. I know you as I know myself. You are part of me. I am myself at the moment a prisoner in chains. You share in spirit my captivity. And in a deep sense you free me from it. Your brotherly love releases me into that happy world of freedom which I share with you. And, further, we are committed to the same cause. We have to bring home our Good News to the conscience of the world. We have to defend it when it is attacked, to build up the case for it, to make men see and feel and know that it is the one hope for our poor wounded, wayward world. We are in this work partners, and I am as sure that you will not fail me as I am that I shall not fail you. Nothing can really

damage a partnership that is founded upon God, the living God, God in action, God in operation, God in me, God in you, God in us. That, amid all the uncertainties of life, is the one sure thing. No one can take away what God has given, is giving and will give.

8 I have said that we are partners. But it is not only that. Humanly speaking, I am very fond of you Philippians. In a fatherly, spiritual sense, in which there is no sentimentality and nothing unwholesome, I yearn over you. I use the word deliberately, as in the sight of God. I desire your perfection. Our Lord has taught me to feel compassion, and to love my fellow-men. All that I am able to wield of the sublime love of Christ I direct towards you. Love evokes love, the divine love certainly, and, I hope, even mine. 9 Accordingly, I want you to grow in love more and more, and that not casually, as men who spill their affection at random, but with the directed insight of instructed appreciation, with the discernment of the highest Christian culture. 10 That will enable you at all times to recognize without effort and to prefer instinctively the things that are really good.

That is what I want to see you doing. I want the light of God to shine clear through you. I want the current of the divine power to be operative in your lives, and not to be held up by any impediment in you. That is what will guard you safe against the Day of days. 11 That will render you fruitful, or, as Isaiah put it, trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified. You see what I mean. You are to be transparent vehicles of God's converting grace. It would be bad theology to suggest that the divine glory is actually increased by anything that we do.

But it has its full range, it illuminates the earth more perfectly, when the clouds of ignorance are swept away, and the barriers of self-will are thrown down, and the gates lift up their heads for the King of Glory to come in.

12 You wonder perhaps how I am getting on. I should like you to know. It is good that you should be interested in me, as I am in you. The answer is—on the whole, very well, thank you. I am still a prisoner, but somehow it all seems to help. As you know, I do not really care much what happens to me. I only care about the cause. And that is going forward. The Good News is being proclaimed as much as ever, in a way more than ever. 13 I have discovered that for it—

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage.

I am chained to a soldier all the time. The soldiers take it in turns, but I have no time off. The happy result of this is that by degrees the whole Praetorian Guard has come to know that Paulus, the prisoner of Caesar, is a servant of Christ. I like the men. They are tough, but they are willing to talk. We talk about their sport, their courting, and all sorts of things, but they all know what I am here for. So the News reaches those with whom I could never have made contact in any other way. 14 And it is not only the soldiers who are being touched. I meet them one by one, but I have many other contacts with friends in Rome. Everywhere there are signs of spiritual life. The whole Church in this place is being quickened to new zeal. The Church in Rome, not having had any apostolic founder, has been rather a scattered community, but it has rallied round me. I think I may say that most of them have grown

in faith. My chains have bound them even faster to the Lord than ever. They have become more bold in making known the blessed revelation which the Lord God of our fathers has entrusted to us. You know we call it the Word of God. A word is intended to be spoken. A silent word is a contradiction in terms. Words live, and communicate their vitality to others. The Word of God was not given to be hidden in a napkin or buried in the ground. The Church is a society for the propagation of the Word. And that is the lesson which our friends here are learning. Or anyhow a great many of them.

15 You know, because I have told you, that the Good News is for all mankind. The sole condition of membership is adherence to the Lord Christ. It is a serious error to say, with some of our brothers who, like myself, are of Jewish birth, that converts from the heathen world must first become Jews and keep the Law of Moses. There are some here who are like that. It is not so bad as it was in the churches of Galatia, where they cast away their Christian birthright for a mess of pottage, and in effect pretended that something else, other than Christ Himself, is indispensable. But they do seem to be Jews first and Christians afterwards. Thus, when they preach in the name of Christ, their motive is not altogether good. They are not wholeheartedly for Christ. The result is that they oppose me. They put forward in competition with my doctrine a smaller and in some respects a rival doctrine. 16 There are, as I said, many whose motives are perfectly sound. Their inspiration is love. They know that I am divinely appointed to defend and set forward the pure, uncompromising Gospel. Just because I am a prisoner they

redouble their efforts to do everything that I desire to see done. 17 Others are factious. They name the name of Christ but their motive is partisan. They want to put me in a hole and to discredit my universal interpretation of the News, which, seeing that I am a prisoner, and in need of co-operation rather than controversy, is particularly hard. 18 Still, never mind. They do anyhow name the name of Christ. And even if that is to some extent a cover for partisan schemes the thought that Christ is proclaimed makes me happy.

And I mean to be happy. Happiness is going to be the dominant note in this letter. Annoyance at opposition does not really touch me where I live. 19 It is all transformed into terms of spiritual health and well-being. You may not know it, but you help in this. The prayers you say for me release some of that store of divine blessing which is always waiting to be poured out. God is more ready to hear than we to pray, and is wont to give more than we desire or deserve, but the touch of human intercession opens a door through which the power comes. 20 I am sure that all will be well with me. Like a youngster, I am full of hope. In the Lord have I trusted. I shall never be confounded. It is my habit to speak out boldly in the name of the Lord, to magnify the Lord. And the Lord will be magnified. My tired old body is to be the instrument of it. I do not know how long it will hold out, but the Lord shall have everything that I have or can do, as long as I last. I am His, for life or death. Yes, death. It comes to all. And it may come to me quite soon. I must be prepared for it. You must be prepared for it. 21 In a way I even desire it. My whole life is devoted to Christ, but I am pent in the body.

I am handicapped. I cannot serve as I should like. I tire, I lack power, my body fails me. I cannot have uninterrupted converse with my Master, because there are earthly duties that claim time and strength. To die would be to pass into His perpetual and unbroken Presence. It would be a gain. I do honestly look forward to death as an emancipation—

Then in a nobler, sweeter song

I'll sing thy power to save,

When this poor lisping, stammering tongue

Lies silent in the grave.

Which shall I choose—life or death? The choice does not rest with me.

^{SHALL CHOOSE}
22 It may be that I ~~am intended~~ to live a little longer. As long as I am able to work, there will be some fruit of my work. And that is useful. 23 To me it is—or rather would be, if it were offered—a perplexing choice. My preference is to strike tents and reach my eternal home. That would be the supreme satisfaction of the desires of my spirit. 24 But at the same time I can see that death would withdraw me from service here, and service in your interests. 25 I cannot help being aware of that, and inasmuch as God is no doubt more concerned for the perfecting of your character than for the satisfaction of my desires, I conclude that it will be my vocation to remain in this life of earth for some time longer. I can still do much for you. I can still encourage and help you to cleave your way forward into the unknown future. I can still promote your happiness, because your happiness is the fruit of your faith, and that I can assist to grow. 26 Thus, if we go on together, you will have real occasion for glorying. Glorying, do I say? I wrote to the Galatians not

long ago, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." In the ordinary way I am all against glorying. It is unwholesome. It is a manifestation of the deadly sin of pride. A man may not glory in himself or in anything that he has of his own. But you may glory in me, your apostle, the founder of your Church, your Father in God. And if I am presently restored to liberty, and can visit you, and take my old place in your assembly and break bread for you in the old way, you will be able to say with a perfectly good conscience, "Glory be to God in Christ for that our beloved apostle has come back to us."

27 You must suffer me to utter this one warning. Glorying is always a dangerous thing. Be sure that your glorying is well-founded, the gesture of true citizens of the commonwealth of God. You are not private individuals who have acquired a valuable possession, about which you boast. You are citizens, who have inherited a great tradition, and exercise an illustrious franchise. You have two Cities, the City of Philippi and the City of God. Render to both their dues, to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. I shall know how you are living up to your vocation. If I am still far away, I shall hear about it. If I come, I shall see for myself. What I want to hear of and see is steadfastness. There is one Spirit of God, ruling all life. Very well, take your stand. And when the Spirit bids you go, go all together, like runners who bend all their energies, not to outstrip one another, but to keep formation. 28 Your faith will sustain you. Your gospel is the truth. You need not

be afraid of anything. There will be those who oppose you. Their opposition is a compliment, a proof that you are right, and that they are wrong and are even heading for destruction. 29 Your faith carries you up to God Himself. He is your warrant. You can take it as a sure confirmation of your faith and a sure pledge of your salvation that God has made you believers in Christ and has enrolled you in the noble army of sufferers for His sake. That is how you know that you are right, when faith grips you and suffering tests you, and the faith casts out or overcomes the suffering. 30 I know what I am talking about. I am a believer. I am a sufferer. That is how I know that I am a disciple, and that I am right.

CHAPTER II

1 WHEN I wrote just now of keeping formation I did not mean merely being together, because it is perfectly possible to march all together in a wholly wrong direction. There was a deep motive and a high ideal of which I was thinking. You all believe that Christ is able to cheer the faint-hearted, His love puts courage into the weak, His Spirit creates fellowship, He is the supreme inspirer of mercy and compassion. You believe all this. 2 Well, if you do, and if Christ has done that for you, let it appear in your lives. So you will fill up my cup of happiness. There must be harmony of mind, love which knows no distinction of persons, but circulates freely and fairly throughout the whole community. In fact your fellow-feeling for one another must be so intense that it really seems as if there is but one mind among you, the mind of the Church, which is indeed the mind of Christ. 3 If there should ever be a hint of factiousness among you, get rid of it. And do not boast. All boasting is idle. It leads nowhere. Humility is the mark of the true disciple, the kind of humility that genuinely believes that the other fellow is the better man and in any dispute is probably right, while he for his part thinks the same about you. 4 Self must at all costs be banished. Be what the psychologists call extroverts, only be much more than some of them mean by the word. Look away from self, and plan and pray and act for the

benefit of your neighbours. In this, as in all things, I point you to the supreme example. Humility and unity are such indispensable things that I do not hesitate to bring to bear the highest possible motive. 5 Consider our beloved Lord. 6 Possessing all things, He was content to have nothing. There He was, in His pre-existent state before the Nativity, God of God, Very God of Very God, of one essence with the Father, having by divine inheritance the lordship of heaven and earth. What does He do with His transcendent privilege? He forgoes it. Mild, He lays His glory by. It is not for Him something to be held on to at all costs. It is a thing to be used. Equal to the Father, as touching His Godhead, 7 He empties Himself of power and privilege. He will keep nothing but His love and His Will to save. These whom He would save are servants, the servants of sin, carnal, sold under iniquity. Very well, He too will be a servant, though not of sin, that He may become the fellow-servant and the Saviour of us sinners. He will not disdain the cellars and basements of His Universe. He will ransack the wilderness, He will compass sea and land, that He may by all means save souls. Think of it, the great Lord of the world, submitting to the conditions of creaturely existence, walking along the roads of human life. Men saw Him, and saw in Him one of themselves, as indeed He truly was. He had willed that He should be that. Yet all the time He was the Incarnate Son of God. There, there is the Divine Pattern of Humility.

Even this, marvellous as it seems, is only half the story. Incarnation is a miracle of divine condescension, but there is more. There is crucifixion. That is the very extremity of self-humiliation.

8 For the Divine Being Himself to live as man among men, to follow the course of human existence even to the end, to "die like men, and fall like one of the princes," that alone is almost past the power of imagination to conceive. But even that is not all. What sort of death was it? The death of the gallows, that grim repulsive tree on which a felon, a common murderer, is hanged. The Cross for us has already become glorious. We exult in it. But the Cross in itself is a vile thing. Cicero, the great Roman orator, whose eloquence is admired by all the cultured people in this city, or indeed wherever the Latin tongue is known, once said that cross was a word which no refined person would ever admit to his vocabulary.

I do not stay here to dwell on the profound doctrine of Atonement, the Sacrifice which was "God's remedy for sin." I only remind you of the boundless love of it. God going all lengths to save mankind. That is why it is often said that Christ is never more truly Christ than on the Cross. Other thrones, occupied by earthly kings, are thrones of honour and majesty. This is a throne of what men call shame and contumely, but it is the throne of the Love of God. That is how the Saviour won His Victory. Angels acclaimed it, and the Eternal Father looked down upon His Beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased, meeting and defeating the massed forces of evil with one weapon only, that of pure love. 9 It was by reason of the motive of the Saviour, even though it was all expressed through the medium of flesh and blood, a humanity which in itself is frail and weak, that the Resurrection was inevitable. Death could not hold so white a life as His. Ascension follows. It must be so. There is no glory

that can be withheld from a Warrior so whole-hearted. Yet even so, in His triumph He remained the meek agent of the Father's Will. He was still our Representative, acting for Man, acting as link between God and man, consenting to obey.

God raised Him to His glory. In His devotion to the Father's Will he had risked all. He had accepted the limitations of earthly life. And even that He had resigned. And by that hazard He had carved His way back to that glory which He had before, and carried with Him, for those who followed in His train, the hope of sharing something of His glory. 10 Jesus, the Human name of Him who came down from heaven and essayed the most stupendous of all imaginable adventures, God has made that the Name of Names. The Resurrection and the Ascension shout aloud to all the world, "Jesus is King." His name resolves all questions and opens every door. Bend, every knee in heaven above, in earth beneath, and in whatever realms there be beneath the earth, bend your proud sinews to adore the Name of your Salvation. 11 Speak, tongues of men and angels. Let young and old, let wise and simple, let commoners and kings unite to magnify the Sacred Name. Jesus of Nazareth, our Brother Man, Jesus Messiah, He is the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

And all this not for His own glory. Even in the hour of triumph and amid the tumult of acclaim, He is still the Way rather than the End. The Father raised Him. The Father gave Him the prevailing Name. It may be that for the soul, the pilgrim soul, the Way is enough. It may be that for the soul "To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive." In Him the soul is

utterly content. Having Christ, we have all. Yes, but the questing mind presses on to the Eternal. And did not our Lord Himself say, "Whoso receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me"? Thus Christ's exaltation is not for His own glory, but for the glory of the Father.

12 Well, I have used high language in speaking about Christ's death and resurrection. I have carried you to the mountain-tops. But I was much moved. You know, whenever I speak of our glorious Redeemer, a passion takes me, and I break into what the world would call extravagance. But the upshot of it, my friends, is that you must reflect the light of this glory. You obeyed my voice while I was with you. Carry on. Do even more, just because I am not with you. Work while it is day. Build up that perfect wholeness of life, that integration of personality to which you are called. It is a fearful thing to be in the hands of the living God. Take it seriously. Register your choices, form your habits, stabilize your characters. You are the architects of your own lives. 13 Yet in your construction never lose the sense of awe, because all your constructive power is really God's. He enlightens the mind, He guides the hands, He even bends the will. People wonder how there can be both divine Providence and human freedom. I do not know. I only know that both are real. In a school how much is the work of the teacher, and how much of the taught? Fifty, fifty? Seventy, thirty? The answer is that it is both all the time. So work away, because the real Worker, in you and through you, is the Lord. His delight, the old Scriptures say, is with the sons of men. But His supreme delight is when the sons of men move forward

in the ways that He has prepared for them, like a key turning in its lock.

14 One homely result of this devout co-operation of man with God will be—no grumbling. What the Father does is well. Don't question it. Don't criticize it. Use it. When things happen, don't say, "How could He do it?" Say, "Why has He done it? What can I learn from it?" So, like old Joshua at Gilgal, you will roll away all fear of reproach. 15 So you will be—not perfect—don't think that—but single-minded, men of unified desires. All round you are people who twist about and run off in all directions after perverse ends. You know where you stand. You know whither you are going. You are God's children. Children are taught by their mothers to walk. What is the direction of the first unaided steps? Why, towards the mother's arms. That gives you your direction. Walk where God beckons you. Then, is it not true that the child's eyes are lit with triumph as he nears his goal? Your victory, as you battle past the shocks of time and circumstance to where God calls you, shines in your eyes, and, though you may not know it and ought not to think much about it,) your victory illuminates the world. 16 Here, anyhow, are some who have a strong hold on the divine revelation which teaches men how to live. You can do it. I believe in you. And I want to have the intense happiness of being able to say in the day of the final unveiling of our Lord in His Glory, when I see you marching in good order past the Throne, "That seasoned army, those warriors, tried and found not wanting, who march so gallantly, those are none other than my Philippian friends." Then shall I know that my life and my labour have

not been in vain. 17 For it is labour. It costs me not a little. My strength is poured out freely. The priest at the altar, bearing his people on his heart, has their names graven there. But the graving-tool leaves its mark. He is the parent and promoter of their faith. But he is, in a true sense, dying for them ~~all the time~~. He loves to have it so. I love to have it so. 18 As your faith grows, I exult in it. I share your happiness. And you must share mine.

19 Now a word about my plans. What is to come we do not know. All plans lie open to the divine overruling. But what I am hoping is that I shall be able to send Timothy to you before long. I want to hear about you, and I am sure that the news will be good. It will encourage me. I need encouragement. 20 And Timothy, young as he is, has proved himself a kindred spirit. He is the kind of man who will genuinely care for you. He will not be content to bring back a superficial account of you, a mere catalogue of a few births, deaths and marriages. He will tell me what I want to know, what I should soon find out for myself if I came to Philippi, the pattern that your lives are weaving. I have no one like Timothy. 21 Others think first of themselves. He thinks of Christ. 22 But I need not labour the point. You know his worth. You know that he has been a son to me, and that, as son willingly helps father, he has worked and toiled side by side with me for the one end of proclaiming the Good News to all the world. 23 And this trusted son and partner I hope to send very soon, as soon as ever I see how things are likely to shape for me here. 24 If they eventually go well, and I believe—God keep me from presumption or any selfish wish in saying this—I

believe they will, I shall come presently myself. I do not really think it will be long before I am released.

25 And I have decided to send Epaphroditus too. By his departure I shall lose another friend. He is to me a brother in the faith. He has worked with me. He has fought the enemy at my side. His going will be a blow to me. But you will welcome him back. He was your chosen messenger to me. He brought those precious tokens, I might say those holy tokens, those alms and oblations, which you sent me. I send him back to you. 26 He has been rather home-sick. He has been longing to see you all again. He has had other sickness too, and he knew that you had heard about this, and he was troubled for your sakes. This cast him down more than the bodily sickness, though that was a bad attack. 27 The courts and alleys in which many of our people have to live are full of fever. He nearly died. But God is compassionate. God's tender mercy rescued him from death, and me from sorrow. Not from all sorrow—I have plenty—but from what would have been the crowning sorrow. To lose him altogether would have quite broken me up. 28 And so, as a thank-offering for his recovery, I am ready to lose him for a time. I therefore send him back to you. I do it gladly. I want him to have the happiness of seeing you again, and that, I assure you, will be some happiness to me. 29 Give him a warm welcome. Believe that our Lord has sent him to you, and that he comes to you as the Lord's servant, to do for you what the Lord wills. Shew him that you have missed him, and are happy at his coming. He deserves all honour. The officers of the Church all do. 30 But he more than most, because he was ready to give all that he had. He

was so eager for the work of the Lord that he faced death at close quarters rather than give up. I am in the ordinary way no friend of gambling, and I seldom use gambling metaphors. But I will say this about Epaphroditus. There was a ten to one chance of pulling through, and he, as the legionaries here say, put his shirt on it, in order to bring me those oblations. He would not fail, lest I should be in want, and, even more, lest you should seem to have been found wanting.

CHAPTER III

1 THERE is more that I could say, but I will only add, "God rest you merry." I seem to be saying the same thing again and again, but I do not get tired of it, and I think that my words do help to keep your feet from stumbling.

2 "The same thing," do I say? Yet here is some thing quite different that I must say, a hard thing. Do you remember the verse in the Psalms, "Many dogs are come about me"? Well, there are dogs about me, shameless creatures, nosing in gutters, whose motive and whose work is bad. Beware of them. I mean the so-called Circumcision, who insist on their difference from the Gentiles but have nothing of the real tradition of old Jewry. They call us rebels because we have thrown open the door. They snarl at us because we think of ourselves as chosen, not by virtue of some physical operation, done in infancy, but by a call from Christ which faith discerns. 3 We are the true inheritors of the promise given to Abraham. Our worship is not limited to "this mountain," nor to Jerusalem itself. We worship God in His Spirit and in His Truth. We boast, oh yes, we boast, but it is not in self, or flesh, or any human thing. Our glory is in Christ.

4 Do you think that I am too severe in my judgment of the Judaizers? I have a right to say what I have said. I have every qualification that they have, and much more than most of them. When I was an infant of eight days my parents scrupulously carried out the

rite of initiation into the beloved community. 5 I am of the holy seed. I trace my descent from the patriarch whom Father Jacob named the son of his right hand, a true scion of the old Hebrew stock. Do these people prate about the Law? Well, I was a Pharisee, nurtured in the straitest sect of those who love the Law. 6 Do they pretend that their intolerance bespeaks zeal? Well, I was zealous—God pardon me for my old, misbegotten zeal—even to the point of persecuting Christian men and women. I kept every jot and tittle of the Law. There was no rule, not one minute particular observance wherein the hardest judge could say that I offended. 7 Yes, I Paul, was rich in privilege, rich in the barren wealth of meticulous performance. My credit at the bank of law was plentiful. And what did I do with it? I flung it away. I had no use for such solvency. 8 The incessant accumulation of merit, piling up marks on paper, was fatal to my spiritual development. I saw this in a flash. I saw that Christ was all that mattered. This legalism, in which I had trusted, was not merely a less desirable, second-best thing. It was a danger to the soul. I flung it to the winds. Henceforth I would stand not on my own credit, but on the mercy of the Lord.

So perished all my old ambition to be a record-breaker in the observance of the Law. And with that went all the other ambitions that men have. There is nothing that I covet now, except to belong to Christ.

And if it be a sin to covet *that*

I am the most offending soul alive.

To have in me the knowledge of Christ Jesus, to know that He knows me, that overtops everything. He is my Lord, and if, in turning to Him, I have been

stripped of all my old privilege, I need no compensation. I do not even need any consolation. I have it. I am happy. The things I once counted valuable are nothing to me. They are rubbish. They are dirt. I have cast them out as the clay in the streets.

9 There is for me but one treasure, a pearl of great price—Jesus Christ Himself. To win that is the aim of my life. "To win?" No, no, *no*. It should be rather to be won. The consummation is only to be expressed in what grammarians call the passive voice. The thing itself is not passive in the ordinary way. It is very active. I seem to leap up on the wings of faith, to soar into the eternal world. But it is, logically and grammatically, passive. I am lifted. God takes me. And so, if I say that I hope to find my Lord, what I mean is that I hope that He will find me. I look forward to—

Another marvel : someone has me fast
 Within his ample palm ; 'tis not a grasp
 Such as they use on earth, but all around
 Over the surface of my subtle being,
 As though I were a sphere, and capable
 To be accosted thus, a uniform
 And gentle pressure tells me I am not
 Self-moving, but borne forward on my way.

I hope for this, not by reason of any goodness of my own, any laws obeyed or conditions satisfied, but by the exercise of that faculty which strips me of myself and makes me Christ's. I call it faith, as you know well by this time. 10 It spurs me on to know ever more and more and more of Him from Whom it comes, to Whom

it binds me. He is the Conqueror of death and His is the power of endless life. His capacity is unlimited, and there is no limit to what He can do even with me. 11 Therefore, since He is Risen and since I am His, there is no door which stops my progress to that divine infinity towards which I am being carried. I see the road opening out before me. It begins where I am now and never ends. Only there is tragedy, that which purges by pity and terror, before the triumph. The road is marked with drops of blood. For me it is a happy road. For my Saviour it was a way of sorrows. It led Him to His Cross. And it beckons me to obtain my happiness by sharing His Passion, to plant my feet in His footsteps, to reshape my ideals and purposes till they are one with the purpose that He had on Calvary. Yes, I see the road before me, but it is a road where only the ransomed and the redeemed can walk. Death is the price which He paid, which I must pay, hour by hour, for my liberty to walk on it. But it brings life. Dead to the old world, to the old sin, to the old self, I go with the gay steps, nay the very wings, of one whom Christ has raised from death.

12 But this is not yet. I have not reached that glorious emancipation. My life has not yet been formed into the fullness which is prepared for me. I am still a pilgrim, walking, for the most part, on two feet on the flat earth. But I go forward. I press on. I follow the gleam. And some day I shall possess. No, there it is again. Those active verbs! That insidious habit of self-trust! As if I did it! 13 Well, let me put it in this way. I shall possess the reality of that vocation which was created in the Mind of the Master when He first began to possess me. I have been His since the

hour of my conversion, and there will come a time when He will be as truly mine as I am always His.

Not yet. I cannot yet entertain that infinite enjoyment. I am too small, too weak, too unresponsive. I am crippled by my wretched past. Yet that is all over. I do not think about it. ¹⁴ I think about the future. I reach out towards it like a runner in a race. I have a goal. I make for it. It is God Who calls me. And there is a prize for them that endure. The prize is to hear the voice of God, speaking through the human lips of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is both Judge and Saviour, and saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant." To hear that is very heaven.

¹⁵ We who are adult disciples, initiated—to use a term that is often—too often—on the lips of some of our friends—must not think that we have reached a stage where we can rest on our privileges. We must always have a mind to press on. And if any of you have not yet caught the idea of continual progress, God will make it plain to you that His service casts out idleness. ¹⁶ Above all, do not drop back. Hold what you have, and keep moving.

¹⁷ I want you to go forward in step, following my lead, and keeping your eyes on me and my lieutenants. We mark the direction. We set the pace. Follow our lead. ¹⁸ For there are some, I must even say many, who march out of step. I have warned you of this before. It is distressing. Tears fall on my paper as I write the melancholy words. Some of our own company hate and deny the Cross. ¹⁹ I see no other end for them but utter destruction. Their own sin is destroying them already, body and soul. "I will have what I want," they cry, and they set the great god

Appetite on the throne, and bow down and worship it, prostituting their best faculty, that of acknowledging superior worth, to sordid use. They are of the earth, earthy, and their thoughts are mud. It is the more terrible because it is not merely a degradation of human nature. It is that, but it is also a defiance of divine revelation. ~~20 For we are citizens of heaven, we have the freedom of the eternal city, made without hands. Our franchise, our free access to the palace of the King of Kings, is a foretaste of that blessed age to come when Jesus Christ, Healer from all infirmity and Saviour from all sin, will come sweeping down with His angel-train from heaven and re-fashion us into that which will be more worthy of Himself..~~ ~~21~~ This present state is one of humiliation. We creep on the surface of the earth, and the wings of such faith as is given us do not suffer us to rise above the ground. Our Lord will give us some kind of glorious body, perfectly and continuously obedient to the call of the Spirit, such a form as He Himself wore during those great forty days after His Resurrection. That body will no longer be a dull partner, or, worse still, a vicious governor, but an instrument, a servant, perfectly equipped to serve Him in all ways and for all time. He can do this. There is no obstinacy that He cannot subdue, and no infirmity beyond His power to heal. I see Him, in my vision, stand astride the universe, Conqueror, Saviour, Judge, and King.

CHAPTER IV

1 Now, just because this is all so true, because human life does really mean all that, and because Christ does reveal the true pattern of existence, you must stand fast. My Philippians, whom I love, whom I long to visit once more, who have brought so much happiness to me, your pastor, whose faithfulness is a bright jewel in the spiritual crown of my apostleship, remember that your house is built upon a rock. Stand therefore on the living rock, yourselves not less unmovable.

2 There are two of you to whom I must send a special message. Let Sister Euodia and Sister Syntyche remember that they are sisters in the Lord. It seems that they have had a difference. Both of them may be in the right in some respects. That does not matter. What matters it the fact that they both have some understanding of the Mind of Christ. Together let them focus their insights on the road before them, and they will find that co-operation does ten times as much as isolation, a hundred times as much as rivalry.

3 These women will need help. And for that I turn to my old friend, tried and true, who bears this letter. You and I have gone in double harness together many times. You know the way of it. Impart some of your experience to them. For they are grand material. They have pressed forward gallantly side by side with me, and with Clement and all the good company of faithful labourers. I need not enumerate those. God knows their names. They are inscribed in that glorious

catalogue laid up in heaven, the register of the inheritors of life.

4-8 What follows may surprise you. I thought over it, and somehow it shaped itself into metrical form. I wanted to say a word about trusting God utterly, and about having holy thoughts, and here it is in the form of a sonnet. The limitations of the form prevent me from saying some of the things that I should like to say, but perhaps it will be easy to remember :—

God send you joy on joy, and, boon more rare,
Sweet reason, evidence to critic eyes
You stand in the near Presence, quit of care,
Emancipate from fears and phantasies ;
Having some instance, bend the will to pray,
Content to know God worketh all things well,
Nor thankless for the grace of yesterday,
And the strange peace of God, like sentinel,
Shall compass you. Then—let sincerity,
And all that's had in reverend esteem,
Just, clean and sweet, by lips that cannot lie
Well-costed, every praise-deserving theme,
Be as your daily bread, nor ever cease
The quest that wins you to the God of peace.

9 There is a prose post-script to it. You have heard the substance of all this from me before. I was careful to deliver the whole message as it was revealed to me. You heard it with your ears. And I think I may say without arrogance that you saw it in me as I lived among you. The Christian life can be talked about. The tradition can be handed on from one to another, and can be received. But remember, the Christian life itself is a thing that has to be lived.

10 One incident that has made me very glad and

thankful is that you have once more begun to care for my material welfare. There was a break in the delivery of supplies. Oh, I know it was not your fault. You had not ceased to care, but there were transport difficulties. 11 And I am not saying that I felt any want. I may have lacked, but I assure you that I did not feel it. If I have learned one lesson in my life, it is to limit my desires. The wise man is a king, say the Stoics. I know something much better than that. The contented man is free. 12 I can take my medicine, if I have to. I can tighten my belt, if rations are short. And on the other hand I can keep my head in prosperity. If I wax fat, I do not kick. 13 The fact is that I know the secret of life. It is not really a secret. Anybody can know it. But not everybody does. It is that the life is more than meat. Belly full, belly empty, plenty or penury, it does not make much difference to the man whose roots are in the Eternal world. And that is where mine are. That is why—

My strength is as the strength of ten.
Behind my will is God's will, behind my capacity is His capacity. 14 All the same, I will not pretend to be sorry that you could help me. I was short, and it was splendid of you to come to my rescue. You entered into my necessity, and by so doing banished it.

15 I do appreciate your generosity. I could not bear to think that you suppose me indifferent to it. You know yourselves that in those early days, when you were newly-converted, when I quitted Macedonia and was parted from you, yours was the only Church with which I had any dealings so far as contributions were concerned. I did not relax my care for the spiritual well-being of any of them. The care of all the churches

means too much to me for that. But I took nothing from them. I paid my own way, for example, at Corinth, and I took nothing from anyone except you. 16 In fact, before I left Macedonia, while I was still with your Thessalonian neighbours, I worked at my trade there, but you will remember that twice I accepted assistance from you. 17 I did this gladly, not because I want to have presents, but because the sower reaps a harvest, and I want your sowing to have its due spiritual harvest when the last reckoning is drawn. Anyhow, for the time being I can write, "Received with thanks." You have nobly put paid to my account. 18 I have all and more than all that I want. Epaphroditus has delivered your present into my hands. It is a true sacrifice. You know the old belief that the Lord was pleased with the smell of the burnt-offering. Is it not written that when Noah sacrificed after the Flood, "the Lord smelled the sweet savour," and promised that He would no more curse the earth? An old belief—simple, it might be called—but we who know that the true sacrifice is the obedient will can learn a lesson from it. I spoke just now of your harvest. Part of the promise to Noah was "Seed-time and harvest shall not cease." And in Ezekiel the Lord says, "As a sweet savour will I accept you."

You see what I mean. Your gift is offered to One infinitely greater than Paul. It is grateful to me. It savours sweetly in my nostrils. But I am verily persuaded that this, your sacrifice offered on the altar of friendship, is at the same time truly offered on the altar of God and is accepted at His hands.

19 God loves to find His children dealing generously. He for His part will deal generously with them. You

have satisfied my bodily needs. He will not suffer you to want for the body, but He will give you much more than that. His Christ throws open to you the Kingdom of His Glory. And the Father calls you into it. Think of that! The Father calls men into His glory. 20 And the only thing that man can do in return is to give glory to Him. So let us all say, "Glory be to God on high.— We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. Amen.

21 Give my love to every single one of the beloved community. My brothers who are here working with me send their love to you. 22 In fact, the whole Church in Rome sends greetings to you. And if any one of the messages with which I was charged was warmer and more friendly than any other, it was that which came from the slaves and freedmen of the imperial household.

You know the definition of my favourite word "grace." It means "God in action." And God, as we all know, acts through the Beloved Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. That every gift which God has in store for men and through Christ gives to man may be and continue to be yours, is the last word and wish of

Your apostle, Paul.